

BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1961

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., CH.B., D.P.H.

Borough Engineer and Surveyor

R. A. BRUNSKILL, M.INST.R.A., M.R.S.H.

Public Health Inspector

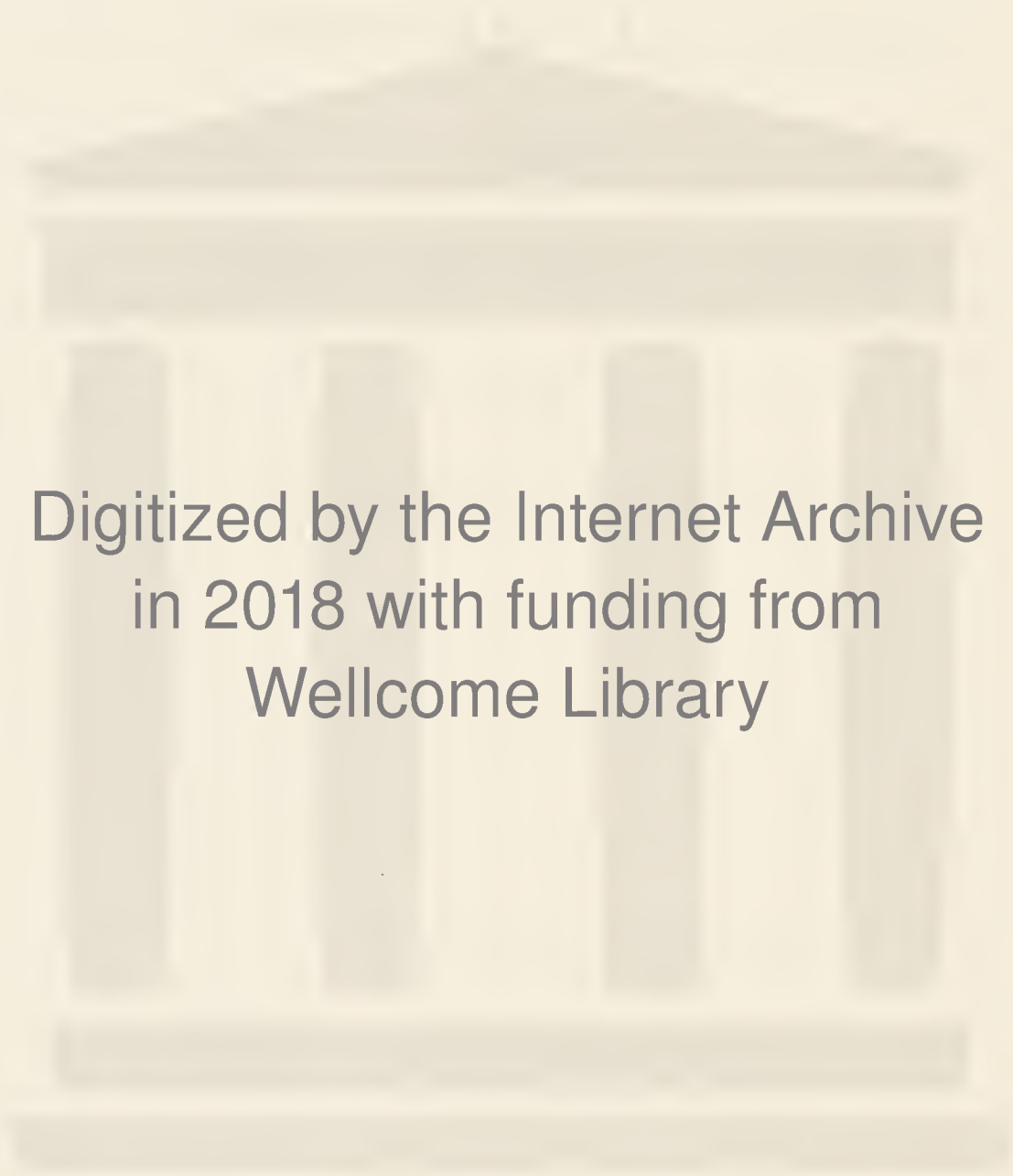
R. F. M. SAUNDERS, C.S.I.B., M.A.P.H.I.
(as from 29th May, 1961)

Assistant Public Health Inspector

E. FURSE

Chief Clerk

Miss PATRICIA FLETCHER



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MR. MAYOR, ALDERMEN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1961, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

The general health of the Borough has been good throughout the year, although there was an epidemic of measles during the spring and early summer.

Vital statistics are set out in the tables below:

SECTION "A"

General Statistics

Area (statute acres)	...	...	...	786
Population – 1931 Census	...	...	...	3,519
Population – 1951 Census	...	...	...	3,897
Estimated home population – mid 1961	...	...	...	3,800
Number of inhabited houses	...	...	...	1,260
Rateable value	...	...	...	£52,286
Product of the Penny Rate	...	...	...	£207
Loan Debt	...	...	...	£191,636

Vital Statistics

				<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
BIRTHS						
Legitimate	...	...		15	29	44
Illegitimate	...	...		2	2	4
						48
DEATHS	...	...	...	31	38	69

*England
and Wales*

LIVE BIRTHS

Number	...	...	...	...	...	48	
Birth Rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	...	12·6	17·4
Corrected birth rate	...	...	...	...	...	13·3	
Illegitimate live births % of total live births	...	...	...	...	...	8·3%	

STILLBIRTHS

Number	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	...	...	...	...	...	20·4	18·7
Total live and still births	...	...	...	...	...	49	

INFANT MORTALITY RATES

Infant deaths under one year	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Total infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	...	...	...	...	...	20·8	21·4
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	...	...	22·7	
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	...	...	...	...	—	
Neo-Natal mortality rate (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)	...	...	...	...	...	20·8	
Early neo-natal mortality rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)	...	...	...	...	...	20·8	
Perinatal mortality rate (stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and still births)	...	...	...	...	...	40·8	

MATERNAL MORTALITY (including abortion)

Number of deaths	...	...	...	...	nil
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	...	...	...	...	—

DEATHS

Number	...	...	...	...	...	69	
Death rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	...	18·1	12·0
Corrected death rate	...	...	...	...	...	12·3	

<i>Year</i>		<i>Population</i>	<i>Birth Rate</i>	<i>Death Rate</i>
1957	...	3,910	8·7	10·4
1958	...	3,890	10·5	16·4
1959	...	3,900	14·8	16·2
1960	...	3,900	11·2	16·6
1961	...	3,800	12·6	18·1

The chief causes of death were as follows:

Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	9
Vascular diseases	...	...	...	...	...	8
Coronary diseases	...	...	...	...	...	12
Other heart diseases	...	...	...	...	...	8
Other circulatory diseases	...	...	...	...	...	5
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	10
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	3
Other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	...	...	2
Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	3
Other ill-defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	6
Accidental	...	...	...	...	...	3

Age at Death Table

<i>Age at death</i>					<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under one year	...	...	...	...	1	—
1–5 years	...	...	...	...	—	—
6–15 years	...	...	...	...	—	—
16–25 years	...	...	...	...	2	—
26–35 years	...	...	...	...	1	—
36–45 years	...	...	...	...	—	—
46–55 years	...	...	...	...	—	—
56–65 years	...	...	...	...	6	2
66–75 years	...	...	...	...	8	12
76 and over	...	...	...	...	13	24
					—	—
					31	38
					—	—

SECTION "B"

General Provision of Health Services

There was no change in the general provision of the health service during the year.

National Assistance Act, 1948

No use was made during the year of the provisions of Section 47 of this Act.

Ambulances

A highly satisfactory service, which provides a twenty-four hour cover for the district as a whole, is given by the St. John Ambulance Brigade, under delegated powers from the Local County Health Authority.

Mass Radiography Unit

The Mass Radiography Unit visited Okehampton during July of this year. A total of 915 attendances were recorded.

War Memorial Hospital

During the year 86 babies were born in the Okehampton War Memorial Hospital as follows:

Okehampton Borough	...	...	...	17
Okehampton Rural	...	...	...	59
Others	...	...	...	10

Section "C"

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

Water Supply — Sources

Supplies from watersheds in the hinterland of Dartmoor feed two intakes. One at Newbridge, three miles from the town on the Blackavon stream has 7" and 5" intake mains and has been in operation since 1939, while the much older and smaller, 2½ miles distant at Yes Tor on the Red-a-ven stream with a 4" intake main has been in use for about sixty years. Both are within the Okehampton artillery firing ranges. Supplies at the intakes have been quite adequate throughout the year. Water is soft in character.

Rainfall

Rainfall records are normally taken monthly at Cranmere Pool and Newbridge on the watershed, and daily at the Filter Station and at the Pleasure Gardens. Returns are sent monthly to the Air Ministry Meteorological Office and the Devon River Board, and are set out below for the past five years:

	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957
Cranmere	81·85	74·55	70·00	—	96·70
Newbridge	65·80	83·60	56·70	—	73·40
Filter Station	52·03	71·57	60·01	58·33	55·65
Pleasure Gardens	50·00	73·30	59·58	55·48	49·11
Dry days (no rain)	157	138	189	147	158

The driest months were February, June, May and November and the wettest January, October, December, and April in those orders. Dry spells were May (20 days) and March (17 days). The heaviest falls were 1.34" on January 29th and 1.16" on January 26th, 1.16" on October 8th.

Of the total rainfall over half fell in the last four months September-December. The weather on the watersheds remained fairly dry during spring and summer but the available supply at the intakes continued adequate.

Attention should be drawn to the general trend as to conditions on Dartmoor over the past three decades. There has been a noticeable drying up of the surface of the Moor and many areas once difficult of access owing to bogs are now so dry as to give easy passage in normal footwear.

Filtration and Treatment

The pressure filtration and lime treatment plant at Brackentor has been in continuous operation throughout the year. Minor faults were remedied by the attendant in daily attendance. A progressive reduction in the flow through the filters caused some concern and the supply mains and the venturi tube were dismantled. The cause was found to be deposits on the plates in the main. These were cleared and flow has since been satisfactory and normal. The bypass main was used during this work. A bypass sluice valve with a hydrant so controls the supply that an emergency supply from the intakes can now be diverted direct to the reservoir without passing through the filter station in case of emergency repairs.

A replacement Relay Valve and Manometer was supplied and fixed.

The treated water is clear, soft, colourless and of excellent taste. It is particularly pleasant for both personal use and domestic washing. Analysis indicate it to be of a very satisfactory standard of purity both bacteriologically and chemically. Thirteen samples taken for bacteriological analysis all passed to Ministry of Health Class 1 Standard. P.H. values have been generally maintained at 7.00. Three men operate on a rota of week-end duties at overtime rates.

Chlorination plant in the Filter Station is available for immediate use in case of emergency.

Distribution

Zonal distribution, giving a stabilised pressure in the controlled low-level area and maintaining pressure in the outer high-level zones, has now been in continuous operation for 24 years without interruption except for repairs.

Mains

Special maintenance work carried out in November included scraping of distribution mains in Station Road, and Brandize Park. In Station Road the 4" mains were satisfactorily and expeditiously scraped. The 3" mains in Brandize Park were very badly encrusted and as the old mains were defective and sub-standard they were replaced with new 3" cast iron mains with tyton joints.

In Brackentor Lane the 6" and 4" mains are limited by three 1½" connecting pipes to reinforce supplies to high level zones.

The pressure gauge control box at Parklands has again proved most useful in connection with the maintenance of proper pressures on the H.P. mains. Minor repairs and overhaul were carried out at the Station Road Pressure Reducing Valve. There was comparatively little frost during the year and the effect on the distribution system was negligible.

Treated water is supplied from the public water mains direct to 1,247 houses and to 3,860 consumers living therein. No Public supplies are by means of standpipes.

New services and supply pipes are now mainly laid in copper and polythene tubes. Service stopcocks fixed direct on the mains obviate cutting off mains supplies during repairs. New Services have been provided for a further 13 houses (new) at Wonnacotts Housing Estate, 5 new private properties and 5 existing properties. Additional mains at the Wonnacotts Housing Site, Crediton Road were connected, and 70 yards of 3" cast iron main with Tyton joints were laid in Vicarage Road. Again no restrictions on the distribution supply were required.

Drainage and Sewerage

Minor repairs were again carried out to the 12" distribution pipes and screening tanks at the disposal works and additional distribution channels were laid out by arrangements with the farmer.

Rivers and Streams

The East and West Ockment rivers are subject to fouling with garbage and rubbish, and a firm hand should be used to suppress this.

Factories and Workshops

Factories and Workshops have been kept in good condition. Inspections have been made in 43 instances. Details of inspections carried out in accordance with the Factories Act, 1937 to 1959 are set out in the tables below and on pages 8 and 9.

Factories Acts, 1937 to 1959

1. INSPECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISION AS TO HEALTH (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors.

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Number of</i>		
		<i>Inspection</i>	<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	4	—	—	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	45	38	—	—
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	5	5	—	—
TOTAL ...	54	43	—	—

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which Prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	by H.M. Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conven'ces					
(a) Insufficient	3	3	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	1	—	1	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	1	—	1	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	5	7	—	2	—

3. OUTWORK (Sections 110 and 111)

<i>Nature of Work</i>	SECTION 110			SECTION 111		
	<i>No. of out- workers in August list required by Section 110 (1) (c)</i>	<i>No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council</i>	<i>No. of pro- secutions for failure to supply lists</i>	<i>No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises</i>	<i>Notices served</i>	<i>Prosecu- tions</i>
Wearing Apparel (Making, etc.) ...	1	—	—	—	—	—

Public Conveniences

Throughout the year new Public Conveniences with a large Public Shelter at Fairplace Rest Garden have been in use.

Infectious Diseases and Disinfection

No cases of infectious diseases had to be dealt with for the thirteenth year in succession.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

The practice of burning the whole of the refuse has ceased and paper and cardboard is now burnt in a small compound. The sooner this tip is dispensed with the better as an undoubted nuisance is created in this semi-built-up area.

Rodent Control

Infestation of sewers with rats in some areas of the town is still in evidence.

Swimming Pool

The swimming pool is in the Rural District and does not, in my opinion, comply with modern hygienic requirements. Tentative proposals are in progress to provide an adequate amenity in the Borough and private enterprise is being approached.

Smoke Abatement

It has not been necessary to take any action in the matter of smoke abatement during the year.

Fish Frying

Both establishments which carry out this trade have been well conducted.

Sanitary Inspections of the Area

The following visits and inspections were carried out during the year:

Housing	...	...	...	...	...	...	180
Drainage	...	...	...	...	...	...	22
Public Conveniences			...	...	...	...	38
Sewerage	...	...	...	...	...	...	55
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	71
Rivers	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Refuse disposal	...	...	...	...	...	...	79
Dangerous structures	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Rodent control	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Tents and Vans	...	...	...	...	...	...	16
Schools	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Disinfection and desinfestation					...	...	2
Food premises	...	...	...	...	...	...	88
Egg Packing Stations	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Informal Notices – remedied			...	...	...	...	6
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	...	142

SECTION “D”

Housing

Housing Repairs

Individual defective houses were inspected and six were rendered fit by informal notice.

Housing, Management, Maintenance and Repairs

Normal maintenance repairs have again been minor in character and small in numbers. All repairs except electrical and exterior painting are carried out by the Council’s own small maintenance staff. Houses at Savile Mead were in process of being externally repainted by contract at the end of the year. In addition special repairs and improvements included the erection of front porches at six houses in Simmons Way, and minor improvements at other houses.

Repairs are carried out as quickly as possible to avoid excessive maintenance and repair costs. This has been very evident in the case of the pre-war houses. Arrangements for thoroughly overhauling, cleansing, repairing and redecorating each house on change of tenancy virtually gives each tenant a clean new house at the commencement of occupation. Tenants are also invited to exchange accommodation so as to reduce overcrowding and eliminate under-occupation.

At Wonnacotts Housing Estate there were 12 houses in course of erection at the beginning of 1961, and these were completed during the year. Three private houses were being built at the beginning of the year, eight were completed during the year, but none were in the course of erection at the end of the year.

There are several bad areas within the Borough where, sooner or later, slum clearance procedure will be necessary. Probably the worst are in High Street, Church Street, North Street and Exeter Street.

SECTION “E”

Inspection and Supervision of Food

Milk

According to the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations 1960, the power of sampling was taken over by the County Council.

Ice Cream

Samples of ice cream for bacteriological examination were taken during the year with the following results:

Grade I	...	...	10	} Satisfactory on repeat samples
Grade II	...	...	1	
Grade III	...	...	2	
Grade IV	...	...	—	

Slaughterhouses

One slaughterhouse has been in regular use and has been well maintained.

Arrangements made with the Okehampton Rural District Council for Meat Inspection in the Borough continued satisfactorily until the appointment of Mr. Saunders as Public Health Inspector in May of this year, when the duty was once again undertaken by the Borough Council’s Officer.

Details of the number of animals killed and inspected and the carcasses, parts or organs condemned are set out in the table on page 13

Bakehouses, Meat and Food Shops

The number of food premises in the area are as follows:

Grocers	...	...	...	...	13
Greengrocers	...	...	...	...	8
Confectioners	...	...	...	...	4
Bread and Cakes	...	...	...	...	4
Meat Shops	...	...	...	...	7
Fish Shops	...	...	...	...	2
Milk Shops	...	...	...	...	2
Dairies	...	...	...	...	3
Hotels and Bars	...	...	...	...	9
Cafes	...	...	...	...	8

Bye-laws made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the proper handling of food sold for human consumption are in force.

There is one large modern hatchery, and one large and three smaller egg-grading and packing stations, all of which have been maintained in good order.

Other Foodstuffs

131 tins and packets of foodstuffs were condemned and 3 condemnation certificates have been issued.

Food Poisoning

No cases of food poisoning were notified during the year.

Samples taken under Section 2, Food and Drugs Act, 1955

Ground Almonds	}	ALL GENUINE
Christmas Pudding		
Tuna Fillets in Olive Oil		
Bitter Lemon		
Dairy Ice Cream		
Gin		
Biscuits and Butter		
Buns and Butter		
Full Cream Condensed Milk		
Prepared Fruit Jelly		
Olive Oil		
Chicken Croquettes		
Dairy Cream Sponge		
Milk – 92 samples		

CARCASSES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	<i>Cattle excluding Cows</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Lambs and Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
Number Killed (if known)	273	15	1	806	463
Number inspected ...	273	15	1	806	463
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysterci:</i>					
Whole carcasses con- demned	1	1	—	15	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	68	3	—	44	25
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affec- ted with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	26·67%	25·28%	—	7·32%	5·4%
<i>Tuberculosis only</i>					
Whole carcasses con- demned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	—	—	—	—	10
Percentages of the num- ber inspected affec- ted with tuberculosis	—	—	—	—	2·2%
<i>Cysticercosis:</i>					
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrig- eration	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned ...	—	—	—	—	—

SECTION "F"

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and Other Diseases

Infectious diseases notified by Medical Practitioners

				<i>Dysentery</i>		<i>Whooping Cough</i>		<i>Measles</i>	
				<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Under 1 year	...	...	...	—	—	1	—	1	—
1 year	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	8	8
2 year	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	6	1
3 year	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	12	8
4 year	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	14	9
5-9 year	...	...	...	—	—	1	1	60	57
10-14 years	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	6	3
15-24 years	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 and over	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	1
Age unknown	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	5	10
TOTAL				1	—	2	1	112	97

Infectious diseases notified by School Authorities

SCHOOL	<i>Mumps</i>		<i>German Measles</i>	<i>Measles</i>	<i>Whooping Cough</i>
Okehampton County Primary	39		3	141	4
Okehampton County Secondary	2		—	—	—
TOTAL	41	...	3	141	4

Tuberculosis

There were no deaths recorded from this cause during the year, and no further cases were added to the existing Register. At the end of the year 23 cases remained on the register as follows:

<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	
<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
10	10	2	1

In conclusion, I would thank the Mayor and Corporation for the ready hearing my proposals always receive, and the Public Health Staff and others who have assisted in the preparation of this report.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE,
Medical Officer of Health.

